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## Ronald McDonald Family Room Opens at Edward Hospital

The first Ronald McDonald Family Room in Illinois opened at Edward Hospital in Naperville. The Family Room was developed through a partnership between the Edward Foundation, the hospital's fundraising arm, and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana (RMHC-CNI).

The nearly 2,000-square-foot Ronald McDonald Family Room is a short walk from Edward's Newborn Intensive Care (NICU) and Pediatric Intensive Care Units. It has a living room with relaxation areas, a kitchen, two computer stations with Internet access, two sleeping rooms, showers, and a playroom for patients and siblings.

Matthei and Colin was the architectural firm, and Gage Engineers was the engineering firm on the project.

Always located in or in close proximity to major children's hospitals, RMHC-CNI provides a "home away from home" for families of pediatric patients being cared for in Chicago-area hospitals, while also proactively reaching out to children in need with mobile medical care and educational opportunities.

Renovation of Edward's NICU will begin soon and result in 22 private rooms that will provide newborns and parents with space, comfort, and privacy needed for treatment, consultation with doctors and nurses, and time alone for mom, dad and newborn.

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Naperville

## Families get relaxation spot at Edward Hospital



By Melissa Jenco TribLocal reporter Today at 2:48 p.m.



Michael Gillespie, 3, of Plainfield, plays with Ronald McDonald in Edward Hospital's new Ronald McDonald family room. Gillespie was born 10 weeks premature with most of his internal organs outside his body. He spent the first 299 days of his life in the hospital. (Melissa Jenco/Tribune)

For the past three days, Jessica Schaefer has been stuck in her room at Edward Hospital while being treated for low calcium levels.

But Tuesday, the 11-year-old Naperville girl not only had the energy to walk around, she had a brand new facility to explore – the Ronald McDonald family room. (Photos: Hospital opens state's first Ronald McDonald room)

“For her to be able to walk out of the room, break the monotony of being sick for a little while and sit down and play a game and see all the kids that are there, it’s a big change,” mom Lisa Schaefer said as Jessica and her father Dave played a game of Trouble.

Tuesday, Edward Hospital celebrated the opening of its nearly 2,000-square foot Ronald McDonald family room, the first space of its kind in the state.

The facility, which is located inside the hospital near both the newborn and pediatric intensive care units, includes a living room, kitchen, computers, two bedrooms with their own bathrooms, a family bathroom with a shower and a playroom.

“This is for all our patients and our family members who will now have a wonderful place to stay very close to where their children are being cared for,” hospital President and CEO Pam Davis said Tuesday.

The family room was created through a partnership between the Edward Foundation and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana.

“(Edward Hospital) really does so much good, and it’s here during some of the families’ most challenging times. And we’re just proud to be a small part of it to help provide that care and comfort for families when they need it most,” said Doug Porter, CEO of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana. “It’s so important during this time of crisis the family unit is able to stay together.”

Keri and Greg Gillespie of Plainfield could have used a place to relax during the 299 days their son Michael spent in the hospital after being born 10 weeks premature and with many of his internal organs outside his body.

The family napped in recliners and next to the incubator as they kept watch over their son.

“We had several close calls with him so at those times you don’t want to leave the hospital,” Keri Gillespie said as Michael, now 3, played with the train set in the family room.

Chelle and Doug Arends of Naperville also know firsthand how hard a hospitalization can be on a family. When their son Coleson, 7, was diagnosed with leukemia at age 3, he initially had to go to Chicago for treatments, making it tough for his siblings to see him. Even after Coleson started receiving treatments at Edward, there wasn’t a place for the family to spend time other than his room, and Chelle said she didn’t want to leave his side.

“Just a small thing like this with a kitchen and a place to relax, it will mean the world to patients and families,” she said.

Edward has also outfitted 16 pediatric patient rooms with high-tech equipment that will allow them to function as intensive care rooms and soon will renovate newborn intensive care rooms.

For information about volunteering at the family room or making a donation, contact Katie Allabough at (630) 527-3800 or kallabough@rmhccni.org.